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forms a graphic picture of the variations of the relative proportion of individuals and species. The slightest change in the conditions of normal life may lead to the disappearance of the last member of a species, or on the contrary the species may thrive and continue to thrive. Species persist, they increase immeasurably in numbers, or their numbers fall off, and they disappear, subject but to the intervention of two sets of influences, affinity and the circumstances that determine their displacements in space. "These modifications, no doubt, sometimes involve other important modifications in the conditions of life; variations may ensue which find their repercussion in the aggregate of the interaction. Thus, linked to one another and to the world from which they come, the life, the transformations, and the death of organisms are functions of their interdependence."

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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

DIDEROT'S EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS. Translated and edited by *Margaret Jourdain*. "The Open Court Classics of Science and Philosophy," No. 4. Chicago and London: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1916. Pp. vi, 246. Price \$1.25 or 4s. 6d. net.

Among the documents of the renaissance of the eighteenth century, none are of more interest than the early informal contributions to ethics and philosophy of Diderot, written with much of the incoherence of the epistolary form. They are, as he claims again and again, *Letters*; and they are letters written in a hurry. *The Philosophic Thoughts*, which is the only one of Diderot's works in this selection not in the epistolary form, is said to have been thrown together between Good Friday and Easter Monday of 1746. Yet they are not philosophic journalism, no mechanical transmission of the current philosophical coin of the day. It is for their originality of outlook that they have been closely studied in Germany, while in England there is Lord Morley's study of Diderot in relation to the movement centered in the *Encyclopédie*, *Diderot and the Encyclopædists*.

This selection includes the *Philosophic Thoughts*, a breviary of eighteenth-century scepticism, a copy of which was found in the possession of the unfortunate La Barre, and in which Diderot appears as a Deist, to whom the argument from design (Thought XX, pp. 56-58) is still of weight: "I am greatly deceived (he writes) if this proof is not well worth the best that has ever issued from the schools." That very argument is very differently treated in the *Letter on the Blind* (p. 109) by Diderot's mouthpiece, the blind mathematician, Nicholas Saunderson, who conjectures a world in its early stages "in a state of ferment," without any vestiges of that "intelligent Being whose wisdom fills you with such wonder and admiration here.... What is our world, but a complex, subject to cycles of change, all of which show a continual

tendency to destruction; a rapid succession of beings that appear one by one, flourish and disappear; a merely transitory symmetry and momentary appearance of order?"

In the brilliant passages in which Diderot sketches the probability of evolution he appears as a forerunner of thinkers such as Erasmus Darwin in England and Lamarck in France. Transformism only needed the partial scientific confirmation it received from Lamarck and Geoffroy St. Hilaire in the early decades of the nineteenth century, "to pass from the realm of systematic philosophy into that of scientific controversy."

The *Letter on the Deaf and Dumb*, a criticism addressed to the Abbé Batteaux, author of the *Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle*, has its interest as a forerunner of Lessing's *Laokoon*, in esthetics. It also contains the idea of a *muet de convention* (theoretical mute), which is closely paralleled by Condillac's Statue in the *Treatise on the Sensations*, published three years after Diderot's Letter. Condillac's treatment of the idea, however, was far more systematic and detailed than Diderot's, and he did not by his own account owe the suggestion of his statue to Diderot.

Diderot, the most German of French authors, as far as his style is concerned, bears translation well. He has been neglected by translators, however, until this edition, which includes all that is of permanent value in his early works of 1751, the date of the Letter on the *Deaf and Dumb*, excluding the relatively uninteresting *Sceptic's Walk*.

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THE NEW PHILOSOPHY OF HENRI BERGSON. By *Edouard Le Roy*. Translated from the French by *Vincent Benson, M.A.* New York: Holt. Pp. 235. Price \$1.25 net; by mail \$1.35.

This interpreter of Bergson's philosophy is also the author of the article "What is a Dogma?" in the body of this issue of *The Monist*. He is particularly fitted for the present task because though not a pupil of Bergson's he had followed much the same trains of thought quite independently so that when he became acquainted with Bergson he recognized in his work, as he himself says, "the striking realization of a presentiment and a desire." That M. Le Roy has comprehensively grasped Bergson's spirit and conclusions so that the present volume furnishes a valuable *prolegomenon* to the study of the famous Frenchman's thought is attested by the following lines in the Preface in which Bergson himself has set the seal of his approval on the task. M. Bergson wrote to M. Le Roy: "Underneath and beyond the method you have caught the *intention* and the *spirit*.... Your study could not be more conscientious or true to the original. As it advances, condensation increases in a marked degree: the reader becomes aware that the explanation is undergoing a progressive involution similar to the involution by which we determine *the reality of Time*. To produce this feeling, much more has been necessary than a close study of my works: it has required deep sympathy of thought, the power, in fact, of rethinking the subject in a personal and original manner. Nowhere is this sympathy more in evidence than in your concluding pages, where in a few words you point out the possibilities of further developments of the doctrine. In this direction I should myself say exactly what you have said."

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